CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 14 AUGUST 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PHILIPPINES ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE HON. DOMINGO L. SIAZON, ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AD HOC COMMITTEE TO NEGOTIATE A TREATY BANNING THE PRODUCTION OF FISSILE MATERIAL

I have the honour to transmit the text of the statement of the Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Domingo L. Siazon, on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material.

It would be appreciated if the statement could be circulated as an official document of the Conference.

(Signed) Lilia R. Bautista
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

GE.98-63185

Press Statement of the Hon. Domingo L. Siazon,
Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines,
on the Decision to Establish an Ad Hoc Committee
to Negotiate a Treaty Banning Production of Fissile Material
for Nuclear Weapons or other Nuclear Explosive

The Philippines welcomes the consensus reached in the Conference on Disarmament to establish an Ad Hoc Committee as a critical first step leading to negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive. Coming shortly after the series of nuclear testing in South Asia, the decision adopted by the Conference on Disarmanent provides hope that the cause of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmanent can advance as we move towards the new millennium.

The negotiations on the ban on fissile material will be the most important negotiation since the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The Philippines sincerely hopes that procedural matters can be agreed upon as soon as possible to immediately begin negotiation. While the Philippines looks forward to early conclusion of a convention on fissile materials, it is under no illusion that negotiations will be short and easy. The decision to create an ad hoc committee required a great amount of political will, particularly from countries whose security interests are closely linked to nuclear issues, before a consensus was reached. We realize that an even greater amount of political will be needed to successfully negotiate and conclude a convention. Nevertheless, given the high degree of flexibility demonstrated by states in adopting the decision on the ad hoc committee, there is reason to be optimistic that the momentum it has generated will carry the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

13 August 1998